Reviewer's report

**Title:** Barriers encountered during enrollment in an internet-mediated randomized controlled trial

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 16 July 2009

**Reviewer:** Amanda Graham

**Reviewer's report:**

The authors have been responsive to most of our earlier concerns and this is a greatly improved manuscript. The reader is able to follow much more easily the specifics involved in the study protocol, the results obtained at each phase on enrollment, and the conclusions drawn by the authors.

Only one major concern remains and it relates to the central premise of the paper which is whether the generation of help tickets influenced ultimate enrollment into the trial. The analysis described on Page 12 does not adequately address this question. In response to our earlier concern, the authors added the following language: “In terms of the number of tickets generated, no significant differences were found between potential participants who ultimately randomized into the trial and those who did not randomize into the trial.” The mean number of tickets between randomized and not randomized is not informative, especially given that the mean number of tickets generated was 0.71 as indicated on page 11. [As a side note, it would be more informative to indicate the mean number of tickets generated – and standard deviation – among those who submitted tickets, not among the entire population.]

The appropriate analysis to address the question of whether ticket generation influenced randomization status is to assign randomization status as the dependent measure in a logistic regression and examine ticket generation as the predictor. This would allow you to address 1) whether individuals who generated any tickets (with ticket generation entered as a binary variable) were more or less likely to be randomized than those with no tickets, and 2) whether individuals with greater numbers of tickets (with ticket generation entered as a continuous variable) were more or less likely to be randomized than those with fewer tickets.

Regardless of the outcome of these analyses, this information should be included in the manuscript, as null results are especially informative.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.